



## Revivals And Church History :: Thomas Walsh

**Thomas Walsh - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2007/2/27 23:56**

[Image: <http://www.pentecostalpioneers.org/images/Circuit%20Rider.jpg>]

### Thomas Walsh

In 1749 Mr. Swindell one of Wesley's zealous evangelists had one of his meetings invaded by a bunch of rough Highland soldiers who had planned to drag him from the pulpit and to beat him almost to death. Instead the worst of these men was stopped in his tracks and mightily converted before all present. These same soldiers were later (in the providence of God) stationed at Limerick. The same Mr. Swindell was on his way to Cork but stopped off in Limerick to preach on St. Patrick's day. As crowds made their way from mass he stood and boldly proclaimed the Gospel on the streets, such was the response that but for the protecting influence of the soldiers he would no doubt have been ripped apart by the angry mob. Again he preached later that day to a great crowd. Amongst them stood a 19 year youth from Ballylin, in the Parish of Croagh called Thomas Walsh. This young man was in earnest that day as he listened the words preached from Matt. 12v28. Standing there listening he was mightily converted. Out of this one day's preaching a gathering of believers was raised up.

Later that year in September young Thomas joined himself to a class meeting in Newmarket. One Methodist Circuit rider would later say it was difficult to proceed preaching to these gathered believers as his voice was drowned out by their prayers and praise. A quick work was done in this young man's heart and God began to raise him up to preach. He could see in this new move of God in the land all the marks of the early Apostolic Church and so gave himself to study in order to help forward the work. Besides his own Irish he mastered English, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, he had such success in his studies that he truly believed he was being Divinely helped and prepared. Amidst all his studies he would often break forth into praise to God.

He got in touch with John Wesley to ask him concerning the call of God, Mr. Wesley returned advice in a note. Along with a friend he walked thirty miles to his first preaching appointment at Shroneel. Here a large congregation gathered in a barn to whom he preached morning and night for the next few days. Some mocked and others turned to the Lord. Feeling a burning call of God he gave himself unto the ministry of the Gospel. From then on he preached twice every day at Limerick with great power. Souls who heard him began to come under deep conviction of sin and get saved.

Next leaving his work in Limerick he travelled through other parts of the south of Ireland. By now there was a little harvest gathered in different places through the labours of other preachers, which he helped encourage and strengthen. He had a great love and burden for preaching in the open air which he would do two and three times a day and often travelled great distances between preaching. He had great success in opening up new areas and multitudes from all denominations would come hear him preach. In country towns many would stop to listen him out of curiosity, but soon were found weeping their way to Christ. The poor would literally drop to their knees and cry out for the mercy of God. He preached on "mountains and highways, in meadows, private houses, prisons and ships."

The priests and others were outraged at his success and influence and so began to spread false reports and rumours about him. This did not work, so next mobs were stirred up against him. Frequently he was attacked with sticks and stones and even while preaching would have to run for his life from a stone throwing mob. One such time was in January 1752 while travelling to Roscrea and just a mile from the town that a group of men armed with sticks and stones who had placed themselves under an oath took him captive. They brought both a Catholic and Protestant priest out of the town in the hope of turning him to either, just as long as he turned his back on Methodism. After confounding all their talk they promised to let him go as long as he never returned to Roscrea, to which he responded that he would rather choose martyrdom than do that, which was a probable choice to this crowd. They then took him into the town and threatened again that if he did not promise he would be thrown down a well, again he refused. As part of the crowd cried out for him to get chuckered down the well and others called for his release a local minister came to his aid who escorted him away to safety. But soon again he made his way out into the street amidst the market crowd and boldly lifted his voice in proclaiming the Gospel. He was quickly seized by the crowd and violently thrown out of the town. As he mounted his horse he bowed his head and raised his voice in prayer to God. Unmoved by opposition he again returned to this town where some believed and formed a new Wesleyan Society.

By 1752 he was one of only nine itinerant Methodist preachers in the land. It was decided that unless a man could preach twice a day he ought to remain a local preacher as opposed to an itinerant. The whole of Ireland was split into six circuits which were designated Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Athlone, Wexford and the North. Each circuit would take a preacher about three months to travel. In May 54 their main conference was held in London which Thomas attended, here in the open air he lifted his voice and preached to great crowds of his own countrymen in their own language. Also at the famous Moorfields a week later he preached to a great host both in Irish and English that by all means he might gain some. It was at this stage that Wesley said of him that he did not know any preacher who in so few years was the instrument of converting so many sinners from the error of their ways. This was a very high accommodation from such a great Evangelist in this early Methodist movement.

He returned from London to Cork where he began to have a good hearing from great crowds of Catholics who gladly heard him even though the priests done all in their power to hinder. All opposition was to no avail, Walsh was fervent in his labours, prayers, and tears in seeing men turn to Christ. While journeying from Cork to Bandon one day he entered into conversation with a man as he rode along until the point of opening up the Gospel to him. The man suddenly broke forth into a religious rage threatening to kill Walsh that moment for these deceits he preached. Walsh replied to the man in Irish which shocked him and stopped him in his tracks while the Gospel was given to him in his own tongue. The man went away broken and contrite. While on the Limerick circuit he fell seriously ill, in writing to Wesley at this time he said, "I find, as it were, an infinite desire to preach the Gospel, and if I could, to set the nation on fire. But the providence of God keeps me weak, and often visits me with afflictions of body. I do not murmur, neither do I count my life dear unto myself..." At the same time a number of the other itinerant preachers were laid aside by illness through the great labour they were undertaking. The weather, oppositions and amount of constant travel and labour took its effect on these men's bodies. But at this time it all worked to cause other young, holy, zealous and faithful men to be called out into the ministry.

In 56 during Wesley's first visit to the North, Walsh visited Newtownards where he set about having an open air. While opening in prayer a man called Mortimer accompanied by a mob caught hold of him and dragged him through the streets. By help he broke free from them and then made another attempt to preach but again attacked by this mob he had to run for his life. During this escape he was forced to pass through the fields to the mountain by which he was thoroughly soaked, this incident was credited to his soon fatal illness. The same Mortimer followed him next to Lisburn in the hope to stir up the same trouble for him there, but a butcher with a sharp knife came to his rescue and the would be persecutor very soon left town.

When Wesley saw Walsh in 58 he said of him that he was alive but only just. He carried all the symptoms of consumption of which he was in the last stage and beyond human help. In earlier days when urged to take things easier all he could say was "the sword is too sharp for the scabbard." Though not saved 10 years yet he looked easily a man of forty years old and had literally worn out his body in abundant labours not to mention his mind. Frequently he would be up late studying and then up at four in the morning as normal to seek God. Again when challenged by someone to slow down and get more sleep his reply was, "Should a man rob God?" In himself denial was both seen and heard. Throughout these years his sermons were rarely less than an hour and were as loud as they were long. For a time very sick he returned to the place of his birth to be nursed by family and friends. Then by request he was moved to Dublin where he stayed in a room over the chapel, here he fell into a terrible mental and physical conflict of great darkness which was almost too much for him. But just before the end the Lord came to him, the battle broke from off him and he cried out "He is come! He is come! My beloved is mine, and I am His; His for ever;" and with that he went into the presence of His Master.

**Re: Thomas Walsh - posted by rkjmal (), on: 2007/3/30 15:56**

Glad you liked the article. Hope it was a blessing to you. God Bless.

Keith Malcomson.  
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